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(54) **Sugarless coating for
comestibles and method**

(57) A sugarless coating containing a normally hygroscopic material e.g. sorbitol, mannitol or HSH, in a crystalline form is provided which may be applied to chewing gum pieces,

confections, or medicinals in the form of pills or tablets. The coating may be formed by first applying a syrup of the hygroscopic material to the core, followed by a dusting mix of the material in dry form. The coating may further include binders, film-formers, anti-sticking agents and dispersing agents.

GB 2 079 129 A

SPECIFICATION

Sugarless coating for comestibles and preparative method therefor

The present invention relates to a sugarless coating containing a normally sweet hygroscopic material in crystalline form, to a chewing gum, confection, and medicinals and therapeutics in the form of pills or tablets containing such sugarless coating, and to a method for applying a sugarless coating containing such a normally sweet hygroscopic material to any of the above-mentioned comestibles.

Candy-coated chewing gums have long been a favorite among young and old alike. The candy coatings generally employed are sugar-based and thus are not used as coatings for sugarless gums.

Xylitol may be used as a coating for sugarless gums. However, for various reasons, xylitol containing chewing gums have not received satisfactory consumer acceptance.

Sorbitol, long used as a plasticizer and sweetener, has been used as a substitute for sugar in forming sugarless candy coatings for sugarless chewing gums. Unfortunately, however, it has been found that when sorbitol is applied in an aqueous coating solution to chewing gum centers, the sorbitol does not recrystallize to form a thin crystalline coat. Moreover, the chewing gum centers subjected to the sorbitol coating step stick to one another forming undesirable clumps.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the present invention, a sugarless candy coating comprising a normally sweet hygroscopic material in crystalline form, preferably crystalline sorbitol, is provided which may be used in the preparation of candy coated chewing gums and confections, and may be generally used in the preparation of candy coated pills, tablets and other solid shapes. The problems associated with the application of sorbitol-containing coatings can be overcome, in accordance with the present invention, to produce a uniform sugarless coating, with good appearance, and flavor release and having bite-through and chew properties of a soft crystal.

The technique employed in accordance with the present invention for forming a sugarless coating on a solid shape to be coated (hereinafter referred to as centers) includes the steps of applying to the centers a first coating syrup which contains a sweetener such as sorbitol and/or other non-sugar sweetener, for example, mannitol or hydrogenated starch hydrolysate, an adhesion or binder component and a film-forming component, to thereby coat the centers with the first coating syrup, and then applying a dusting mix to the centers coated with the first coating syrup, the dusting mix including one or more sweeteners, such as employed in the first coating syrup, in powdered form, and a moisture absorbing component, an anti-sticking component and a dispersing agent. If desired, in a preferred embodiment, a second coating syrup may be applied to smooth out the coating of the centers and provide a shine thereto, which second coating syrup generally includes ingredients similar to that present in the dusting mix but dispersed in water.

Prior to application of the second coating syrup, the steps of applying the first coating syrup and dusting mix will be repeated, as many times as necessary, to build up a desired coating weight and thickness on the centers.

In carrying out the method of the invention, first coating syrup, sometimes referred to as the grossing syrup will be formed as an aqueous solution of the a) sweetener (or bulking agent), b) adhesion or binder component, and c) film-forming agent. The sweetener (or bulking agent) (a) may be present in an amount within the range of from about 30% to about 70%, preferably from about 40 to about 60% by weight of the first coating syrup; the binder (b) may be present in an amount within the range of from about 10 to about 50%, preferably from about 25 to about 40% by weight of the first coating syrup; and the film-forming agent (c) may be present in an amount within the range of from about 10 to about 40% and preferably from about 25 to about 40% by weight of the first coating syrup. The first coating syrup will also contain from about 20 to about 70%, and preferably from about 25 to about 65% water.

The first coating syrup or grossing syrup functions as a wet base layer to which later-deposited dry sweetener or bulking agent (present in the dusting mix) may adhere or be absorbed on to form the desired coating.

Examples of sweeteners or bulking agents suitable for use in the first coating syrup may comprise substantially any known sugarless sweetener such as any of the sugar alcohols such as sorbitol, xylitol, maltitol, and combinations thereof, with sorbitol being preferred, as well as maltitol, isomaltitol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates as well as various hydrogenated glucose syrups and/or powders which contain sorbitol, hydrogenated disaccharides, tri- to hexa-hydrogenated saccharides, and hydrogenated higher polysaccharides and the modified starch hydrolysates.

The hydrogenated glucose syrups and/or powders may be produced by catalytic hydrogenation of standard glucose syrups (acid and/or enzyme converted) to the point where all the glucose end groups of the saccharides are reduced to alcohols, that is, dextrose to sorbitol. In the case of hydrogenated glucose syrups, the total solids contents will range from about 72 to about 80% which solids are made of from about 4 to about 20% sorbitol, from about 20 to about 65% hydrogenated disaccharides (that is, maltitol), from about 15 to about 45% tri- to hepta-hydrogenated saccharides, and from about 10 to about 35% hydrogenated saccharides higher than hepta.

Other sweeteners or bulking agents suitable for use in the first coating syrup include, but are not

limited to free saccharin acid, sodium, calcium and ammonium saccharin, cyclamate salts, dihydrochalcones, glycyrrhizin, L-aspartyl-L-phenylalanine methyl ester and mixtures thereof.

The adhesion component or binder employed in the first coating syrup aids in initially binding the sweetener to the comestible being coated. Examples of binders suitable for use herein include gum arabic, xanthan gum, gum tragacanth, tapioca dextrin, or modified food starch, with gum arabic being preferred.

Another important component of the first coating syrup is the film-forming agent which enables the deposition of a substantially uniform layer of the sweetener on the comestible being coated.

Examples of film-forming agents suitable for use herein include gelatin, methyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, and/or carboxymethyl cellulose.

The dusting mix comprises a dry powder mixture containing a) sweetener (or bulking agent) similar to (and preferably the same as) that employed in the first coating syrup, b) moisture absorbing component, c) anti-sticking (or filler) component, and d) dispersing agent. Components b), c) and d) are employed in a weight ratio to sweetener a) of within the range of from about 5 to about 30 b):1, from about 2 to about 20 c):1, and from about 0 to about 5 d):1. Thus, the sweetener a) will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 50 to about 90%, and preferably from about 60 to about 85% by weight of the dusting mix, the moisture absorbing component b) will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 5 to about 30%, and preferably from about 8 to about 20% by weight of the dusting mix, the anti-sticking component c) will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 2 to about 20%, and preferably from about 5 to about 15% by weight of the dusting mix, and the dispersing agent will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 0 to about 5%, and preferably from about 0.5 to about 4% by weight of the dusting mix.

As indicated, the sweetener (bulking agent) present in the dusting mix may include any of those employed in the first coating syrup and set out above. The preferred sweetener present in the dusting mix will be sorbitol.

The moisture absorbing compound suitable for use herein includes mannitol, or dicalcium phosphate with mannitol being preferred especially when sorbitol is employed as the sweetener.

Examples of the anti-sticking compound which may also function as a filler employed in the dusting mix include calcium carbonate, talc, or magnesium trisilicate, with calcium carbonate being preferred.

Examples of the dispersing agent which may be employed herein include titanium dioxide, talc or other anti-stick compounds set out above, with titanium dioxide being preferred.

In preferred embodiments, the weight ratio of the solids present in the first coating syrup to the dusting mix will range from about 5:1 to about 20:1.

Generally, a single deposition of each of the first coating syrup and the dusting mix may not be sufficient to provide the desired amount or thickness of coating deposited on the comestible. Accordingly, it usually will be necessary to apply second, third or more coats of each of the first coating syrup and dusting mix in order to build up the weight and thickness of the coating to desired levels. However, before applying subsequent layers of first coating syrup, the previously applied layers of first coating syrup are allowed to dry. For example, in coating chewing gum, the applications of first coating syrup and dusting mix are continued until the average gum piece weight reaches about 90% of the required coated weight. For example, if the coating is to comprise about 35% by weight of the coated chewing gum tablet, application of 8 to 9 coats of each of the first coating syrup and dusting mix may be required.

It will be appreciated that the number of applications required will also vary depending upon the amount of solids present in the first coating syrup, the amount of dusting mix employed, and the type of comestible to be coated.

After a sufficient amount of coating has been applied to the pieces of comestible to be coated, the coating on the pieces may be smoothed and otherwise finished by applying the second coating syrup (also referred to as the finishing syrup) to the pieces. The second coating syrup as indicated includes a) sweetener (or bulking agent) preferably as an aqueous solution or syrup, b) moisture absorber, c) anti-sticking (or filler) component, and d) dispersing agent, as in the case of the dusting mix, as well as e) hot water (temperature ranging from about 50 to about 75°C). Components a), b), c) and d) in the second coating syrup will preferably be the same as components a), b), c) and d) in the dusting mix. The sweetener (bulking agent) a) (as a solid) will be present in the second coating syrup in an amount within the range of about 40 to about 80%, and preferably from about 50 to about 75% by weight of the second coating syrup, the moisture absorbing component b) will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 0 to about 20%, and preferably from about 5 to about 17% by weight of the second coating syrup, the anti-sticking component c) will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 0 to about 20%, and preferably from about 4 to about 16% by weight of the second coating syrup, and the dispersing agent will be employed in an amount within the range of from about 0 to about 8%, and preferably from about 1 to about 5% by weight of the second coating syrup. The second coating syrup will also contain from about 0 to about 25% by weight water and preferably from about 5 to about 20% by weight water.

Flavoring in the form of liquid flavor may be added with the first coating syrup and/or second

coating syrup, while spray dried flavors may be added with the dusting mix. The flavoring will preferably be applied after an initial first coating syrup-dusting mix has been applied.

In the case where the comestible to be coated is chewing gum, flavoring may be added to the gum base. The flavoring in the gum center will be present in an amount within the range of from about 0.5 to about 1.5%, and preferably from about 0.7 to about 1.2% by weight of the gum center. The flavoring in the coating will be present in an amount within the range of from about 0.5 to about 5% and preferably from about 1.25 to about 4% by weight of the coating. Such flavoring may comprise oils derived from plants, leaves, flowers, fruit, etc. Representative flavor oils of this type include citrus oils such as lemon oil, orange oil, lime oil, grapefruit oil, fruit essences such as apple essence, pear essence, peach essence, strawberry essence, apricot essence, raspberry essence, cherry essence, plum essence, pineapple essence, as well as the following essential oils: peppermint oil, spearmint oil, mixtures of peppermint oil and spearmint oil, clove oil, bay oil, anise oil, eucalyptus oil, thyme oil, cedar leaf oil, cinnamon oil, oil of nutmeg, oil of sage, oil of bitter almonds, cassia oil, and methyl-salicylate (oil of wintergreen). Various synthetic flavors, such as mixed fruit, may also be incorporated in the chewing gum of the invention with or without conventional preservatives.

Sweeteners suitable for use herein which may be present in the gum center and/or coating may comprise natural or synthetic sugar substitutes.

Where employed, the synthetic sweeteners may be present in the chewing gum center in an amount within the range of from about 0.04 to about 2% and preferably from about 0.4 to about 0.8% by weight of the chewing gum. Examples of synthetic sweeteners suitable for use herein include free saccharin acid, sodium, calcium or ammonium saccharin, cyclamate salts, dihydrochalcones, glycyrrhizic acid and salts, L-aspartyl-L-phenylalanine methyl ester and mixtures thereof.

Where employed, natural sugars and/or natural sugar substitutes may be present in the chewing gum center in an amount within the range of from about 0.05 to about 90%, and preferably from about 10 to about 85% by weight of the chewing gum. Such natural sweeteners suitable for use herein include sugar alcohols, such as, sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol, isomaltitol, or maltitol. If desired, sugars such as sucrose, glucose or dextrose may also be employed.

The gum base will be present in an amount within the range of from about 10 to about 60%, and preferably from about 15 to about 45% by weight.

In general, the gum base is prepared by heating and blending various ingredients, such as natural gums, synthetic resins, waxes, plasticizers, etc., in a manner well known in the art. Typical examples of the ingredients found in a chewing gum base are masticatory substances of synthetic origin such as styrene-butadiene copolymer, isobutylene-isoprene copolymer, polyisobutylene, polyethylene, petroleum wax, polyvinyl acetate, as well as masticatory substances of natural origin such as rubber latex solids, chicle, crown gum, nispero, rosidinha, jelutong, pendare, perillo, niger gutta, tunu, etc. The elastomer or masticatory substance will be employed in an amount within the range of about 5 to about 15%, preferably from about 8 to about 12%, and optimally from about 9 to about 11% by weight of the gum base composition.

The gum base may also include solvents, detackifiers, waxes, softening agents, lubricants, fillers, emulsifiers, colorants, antioxidants, and/or texturizers, bulking agents and other conventional ingredients as will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Examples of typical gum bases suitable from use herein are disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 3,052,552 and 2,197,719. Typical ingredients included in gum base compositions are the following:

	Base I	Parts by Weight	
	Ester gum	58	
	Chalk	30	
5	Rubber latex solids	10	
	Lecithin	2	5
	Base II		
	Ester gum	88	
	Rubber latex solids	10	
	Lecithin	2	
10	Base III		10
	Chicle	20	
	Jelutong	40	
	Gutta soh	8.5	
	Lecithin	2	
15	Chalk	2	15
	Base IV		
	Partially oxidized chicle	68	
	Lecithin	2	
	Chalk	30	
20	Base V		20
	Jelutong (dry)	60	
	Gutta siak	13	
	Lecithin	2	
	Chalk	25	
25	As indicated, in addition to chewing gum, the comestible to be coated may include any edible solid, such as candies, including hard candies and pressed candies, jelly beans, peanuts, other confections, as well as pills, tablets or other solid dosage forms for medicinal or therapeutic use.		25
	A preferred coating, in accordance with the present invention, for a sugarless chewing gum will have the following composition.		
30	Ingredient	% by weight of coating	30
	Sorbitol	45 to 90	
	Mannitol	2 to 25	
	Gum arabic	0.25 to 3	
35	Gelatin	0.25 to 3	35
	Calcium carbonate	2 to 20	
	Titanium dioxide	0.1 to 5	

The following Examples represent preferred embodiments of the present invention.

EXAMPLES 1 AND 2

40 Sugarless-coated sugarless chewing gums having center or core portions as shown in Table I and coatings as shown in Table II below are prepared as follows. 40

TABLE I
Composition of Gum Center or Core
(present in all chewing gum Examples)

Ingredient	Parts by Weight
Gum base	24
Sorbitol-powder	49
Sorbitol liquid (68—70% sorbitol)	25
Yelkin	0.5
Flavor	2

TABLE II
Composition of Various Coating Mixtures
Required for Forming Coating
on Gum Centers of Table I

Example No.	Parts by Weight	
	1	2
First Coating Syrup (Grossing Syrup)		
Gum arabic solution (48%)	30	30
Gelatin solution (20%)	30	—
Sorbitol liquid (68—70%)	40	40
Hydrogenated starch hydrolysate	—	30
Dusting Mix		
Sorbitol (crystalline powder)	70	70
Mannitol powder	15	15
Calcium carbonate powder	10	10
Titanium dioxide powder	5	5
Second Coating Syrup (Finishing Syrup)		
Sorbitol liquid (68—70%)	62	62
Mannitol powder	8	8
Calcium carbonate powder	8	8
Titanium dioxide powder	4	4
Hot water	17	17
Color (as needed)		

The chewing gum centers are prepared as follows:

Gum base is melted and maintained at a temperature within the range of 150°—175°F. Softener is added and then the solid sugar alcohols are added slowly with stirring. Thereafter, liquid flavor is added and the mixture is stirred until homogeneous. Sugar alcohols are slowly added and then artificial and/or natural sweetener (where employed).

Where spray dried flavors are employed, they are added with the artificial sweeteners.

The above mixture is stirred until homogeneous, cooled, rolled and scored and individual pieces or pillows are produced.

The coating mixtures are separately prepared. The first and second coating syrups are prepared by mixing the various ingredients, under heating if necessary, to form a solution.

The dusting mix is prepared by simply mixing the various ingredients and until a substantially homogeneous mixture is formed.

The gum centers to be coated are placed in a standard revolving coating pan. The gum pieces are dedusted using cool dry air. The first coating syrup mixed and warmed to a temperature of 120°F is applied to the gum pieces. After about 2—3 minutes, the dusting mix is applied to the gum pieces coated with the first coating syrup. The gum pieces are allowed to roll for 2 minutes to absorb the dusting mix. The gum pieces are then dried by contact with gently flowing air for 2 minutes.

The above coating steps are repeated until the weight of an average gum piece reaches about 90% of the required coated weight. For example, if the required coated weight is 35%, 8 or 9 applications of the first coating syrup and dusting mix is needed to reach an average piece weight of 1.5 g.

After the required coating weight is attained, the coated gum pieces are tray dried and conditioned for 1—3 days.

Thereafter, the coated gum pieces are loaded on the standard revolving coating pan. The second coating syrup is applied to the gum pieces. After 1—2 minutes, the gum pieces are air dried for 3—4 minutes. The air is then turned off and additional coating syrup is applied as desired.

If desired, liquid flavor may be pre-mixed with the first coating syrup and/or spray dried flavor may be pre-mixed with the dusting mix to impart desired flavor to the coating.

The so-coated gum pieces may then be polished and otherwise finished employing conventional means to produce sorbitol coated sugarless chewing gum having a soft chew with good sweetness and flavor release properties.

EXAMPLES 3 AND 4

Sugarless coated sugarless candy, having a center or core portion as shown in Table III below and a coating as shown in Table II of Example 2, is prepared employing the following procedure.

TABLE III
Composition of Candy Center

35	Ingredient	Amount (Parts by Weight)	35
	Hydrogenated starch hydrolysate syrup (78% solids, including 6% sorbitol and 50% mannitol)	97	
	Sorbitol syrup	2	
	Malic acid	1	
	Cherry Flavor	0.25	
	Color	0.4	

The hydrogenated starch hydrolysate and sorbitol syrups are fed into the top of a mixing kettle and are cooled under constant slow agitation to 330—335°F. The coloring agent is added at 280—300°F. The mix is dropped at 25" Hg and held under vacuum for 10 minutes. The hot mix is then transferred to a mixing table where malic acid and flavor are added with mixing. The candy mix is allowed to cool to 160—170°F and is tabletted.

The coating is applied as described in Examples 1—2 to produce a pleasant tasting sugarless coated sugarless candy.

In a manner similar to that described in Examples 1 and 2 any type pill or tablet or other solid shape may be coated with a sugarless coating in accordance with the present invention.

CLAIMS

1. A comestible comprising a centre portion coated with a sugarless coating comprising a normally sweet hygroscopic material in crystalline form.
2. A comestible as defined in Claim 1 wherein said sugarless coating comprises one or more of sorbitol, mannitol, or hydrogenated starch hydrolysate. 5
3. A comestible as defined in Claim 2 wherein said sugarless coating includes sorbitol in an amount within the range of from about 45 to about 90% by weight of the coating.
4. A comestible as defined in Claim 3, wherein said sugarless coating also includes mannitol.
5. A comestible as defined in any of Claims 1 to 4, wherein said sugarless coating further includes a film-forming agent and a binder for imparting cohesivity to the coating ingredients. 10
6. A comestible as defined in Claim 5 wherein said coating further includes one or more anti-sticking agents and dispersing agents.
7. A comestible as defined in Claim 5 or 6, wherein said film-forming agent is gelatin, methyl cellulose, hydroxy-propyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, and/or carboxymethyl cellulose. 15
8. A comestible as defined in Claim 5, 6 or 7, wherein said binder for imparting cohesivity to the coating ingredients is gum arabic, xanthan gum, gum tragacanth, tapioca dextrin, or modified food starch.
9. A comestible as defined in Claim 6 or in Claim 7 or 8 when dependent thereupon, wherein said anti-sticking agent is calcium carbonate, talc, or magnesium trisilicate. 20
10. A comestible as defined in Claim 6 or any one of Claims 7 to 9 when dependent thereupon, wherein said dispersing agent is titanium dioxide.
11. A comestible as defined in any preceding Claim, wherein said centre portion is chewing gum.
12. A comestible as defined in any of Claims 1 to 10, wherein said centre portion is candy.
13. A comestible as defined in any of Claims 1 to 10, wherein said centre portion is a pill or tablet for medicinal or therapeutic purposes. 25
14. A comestible as defined in Claim 1, wherein said centre portion is chewing gum and said coating is comprised of sorbitol as said hygroscopic material, gum arabic as a binder, gelatin as a film-forming agent, calcium carbonate as an anti-sticking-diluent compound, titanium dioxide as a dispersing agent and mannitol as a moisture-absorbing agent. 30
15. A comestible as defined in Claim 14 wherein said centre portion is sugarless chewing gum.
16. A method for the preparation of a comestible as defined in Claim 1 which comprises the steps of applying to a said centre portion a first coating syrup comprising an aqueous solution of normally sweet hygroscopic material and applying to said so-treated center portion a coating dusting mix comprising said normally sweet hygroscopic material in dry form, at least a portion of said dry hygroscopic material being absorbed on the first coating syrup applied to said center portion to form a coating on said center portion. 35
17. A method as defined in Claim 16, wherein said steps of applying said first coating syrup and then applying said coating dusting mix are repeated, as necessary, to build up a coating of desired thickness on the center portion. 40
18. A method as defined in Claim 16 or 17, wherein said first coating syrup contains a binder and a film-forming agent, and said coating dusting mix contains a moisture absorbing agent, an anti-sticking agent, and a dispersing agent.
19. A method as defined in any one of Claims 16 to 18, wherein said first coating syrup comprises liquid sorbitol, gum arabic solution and gelatin solution, and said coating dusting mix comprises sorbitol powder, mannitol powder, calcium carbonate and titanium dioxide. 45
20. A method as defined in any one of Claims 16 to 19, further including the step of applying a second coating syrup to said center portion previously coated with said first coating syrup and said coating dusting mix, said second coating syrup comprising said normally sweet hygroscopic material and serving to smooth out and provide a shine to the coating of said normally sweet hygroscopic material previously applied to said center portion. 50
21. A method as defined in Claim 20 wherein said second coating syrup comprises in addition to said normally sweet hygroscopic material, a moisture absorbing agent, an anti-sticking compound, a dispersing agent and water.
22. A method as defined in Claim 21 wherein said second coating syrup is comprised of liquid sorbitol, mannitol powder, calcium carbonate, titanium dioxide and water. 55
23. A method as defined in any one of Claims 16 to 22, wherein said centre portion comprises chewing gum, candy, or a pill or tablet for medicinal or therapeutic purposes.
24. The method as defined in Claim 23, wherein said centre is sugarless chewing gum.
25. A method for the preparation of a comestible, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to any one of the foregoing individual Examples 1 to 4. 60
26. A comestible having a sugarless coating, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to any one of the foregoing individual Examples 1 to 4.
27. A sugarless coating for a comestible which coating comprises a normally sweet hygroscopic

material in crystalline form.

28. A sugarless coating for a comestible, which coating comprises sorbitol, mannitol or hydrogenated starch hydrolysate in a crystalline form.

29. The features hereinbefore disclosed, or their equivalents, in any novel selection.

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